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HUMAN RIGHTS QUESTIONS: HUMAN RIGHTS QUESTIONS, INCLUDING ALTERNATIVE APPROACHES FOR IMPROVING THE EFFECTIVE ENJOYMENT OF HUMAN RIGHTS AND FUNDAMENTAL FREEDOMS

Enhancing the effectiveness of the principle of periodic and genuine elections

Report of the Secretary-General

CONTENTS

		Paragraphs	Page
I.	INTRODUCTION	1 - 4	3
II.	IMPLEMENTATION OF GENERAL ASSEMBLY RESOLUTIONS 47/138 AND 48/131	5 - 21	4
	A. Consolidation of electoral assistance capacities and coordination of activities	5 - 13	4
	B. Coordination with other organizations	14 - 20	6
	C. Ongoing activities	21	8
III.	UNITED NATIONS EXPERIENCE	22 - 39	8
	A. Major United Nations missions	22 - 23	8
	B. Support for international observers	24 - 25	8
	C. Support for national observers	26 - 28	9
	D. Observation	29 - 31	9

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CONTENTS (continued)

		Paragraphs	Page
	E. Post-election assistance	32 - 36	10
	F. Technical assistance and advisory services	37 - 39	11
IV.	REFLECTIONS FOR FUTURE ACTIVITY	40 - 48	11

Annexes

I.	Status of Member States' requests as at 17 October 1994	14
II.	Ongoing activities	25
III.	Guidelines for Member States considering the formulation of requests for electoral assistance	27

I. INTRODUCTION

1. The present report has been prepared by the Secretary-General in response to the request made by the General Assembly at its forty-eighth session in its resolution 48/131 of 20 December 1993. The purpose of the report is to present the progress made to date in the implementation of resolutions 47/138 of 18 December 1992 and 48/131, in particular as regards the status of requests from Member States for electoral assistance and verification and the validity of the guidelines provided in 1992 in the light of more recent experience.

2. The present report will review the major elements of United Nations experience in electoral assistance over the past 30 months. In order to provide such a review, the primary activities of the United Nations will be addressed in specific sections. The status of requests for electoral assistance will be presented and a country-by-country overview of the past 12 months is provided in annex I. Experience with the coordination of various activities - both within and outside the United Nations system - and plans for improving such coordination are presented. Progress on continuing activities such as the development and maintenance of a roster of electoral experts, publications and the Trust Fund for Electoral Observation is summarized in annex II. The guidelines for Member States considering the formulation of requests for electoral assistance, first provided in 1992 (A/47/668/Add.1), have been reviewed and updated on the basis of the past 30 months of experience. Revised guidelines are provided in annex III.

3. A primary concern in the provision of electoral assistance is the need for absolute respect of national sovereignty. That concern is highlighted in the fundamental requirement that electoral assistance may only be provided on the basis of a formal request. However, the sensitivity to national sovereignty is maintained throughout the implementation of every assistance programme and contributes to the establishment of an interactive and cooperative working relationship of electoral experts and relevant nationals. In providing electoral assistance in over 50 cases to date, the United Nations has never received a complaint from a Member State regarding interference in its internal affairs.

4. Since its inception, United Nations electoral assistance has been based on the premise that such assistance will eventually no longer be necessary. In recent electoral assistance programmes, emphasis has been placed on the importance of electoral assistance in building confidence among the contending parties, the public at large and in the electoral process itself. At the same time, several programmes have been oriented towards creating greater national capacity to conduct and observe elections. That emphasis will continue in the design of future assistance programmes.

II. IMPLEMENTATION OF GENERAL ASSEMBLY RESOLUTIONS 47/138 AND 48/131

A. Consolidation of electoral assistance capacities and coordination of activities

5. The Electoral Assistance Unit, which provides support and advice to the United Nations focal point for electoral assistance, was transferred to the Department of Peace-keeping Operations in early 1994. The transfer was made in an effort to rationalize the functions of both departments and to consolidate those Secretariat units working directly with the field. The Unit was renamed the Electoral Assistance Division and, as requested by the General Assembly, has continued to function under the regular budget and on the basis of existing resources. On that basis, one staff member from the former Centre Against Apartheid has been redeployed into the Division.

6. With the transfer of the Division to the Department of Peace-keeping Operations, the Secretary-General designated Mr. Kofi Annan, Under-Secretary-General for Peace-keeping Operations, the new United Nations Focal Point for Electoral Assistance Activities. All requests for United Nations electoral assistance should now be directed to Mr. Annan. As the Focal Point, Mr. Annan will determine, in consultation with the Department of Political Affairs and with the technical support of the Electoral Assistance Division, the appropriate response to all such requests.

7. The primary United Nations units involved in electoral assistance have continued to cooperate effectively, as described in earlier reports (A/48/590 and A/47/668). In the field of technical assistance, the Electoral Assistance Division continues to work closely with the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) and the Department for Development Support and Management Services. When appropriate, the participation and support of the Centre for Human Rights has been requested and obtained. UNDP recently transferred responsibility in this area from its Division for Global and Interregional Programmes to the Management Development and Goverrance Division. Based on positive experience in utilizing United Nations Volunteers, cooperation with this programme has expanded and significant numbers of Volunteers have participated in major United Nations missions in South Africa and Mozambique.

8. United Nations resident coordinators have continued to be instrumental in assisting with the organization and funding of electoral assistance activities. Many activities are funded through cost-sharing arrangements with donors or UNDP national indicative planning figures. In some cases UNDP funding has been used to cover start-up costs until cost-sharing funds could be made available. Resident coordinators have also provided valuable assistance to short-term electoral missions by providing important background and administrative support.

9. Most recently, the Electoral Assistance Division and the Centre for Human Rights collaborated in identifying specific priorities for post-election assistance in Malawi. Based on the integrated programme that was elaborated, each office will focus on assistance activities related to its specific field of expertise. However, the integrated framework ensures a comprehensive and

balanced approach that will contribute to the strengthening of both democracy and human rights within the country.

10. Despite the general effectiveness of coordination within the United Nations system, experience has shown that greater effort should be made to facilitate effective working relationships between the Electoral Assistance Division, based at United Nations Headquarters, and the electoral offices of major United Nations electoral missions in the field. A primary reason for the creation of a specialized electoral unit within the Secretariat was to create an institutional memory that would serve as a reference for the organization and implementation of successive missions. Such a memory now exists - in the direct experience of mission participants and in the reports, manuals, forms and other United Nations electoral assistance materials for which the Electoral Assistance Division is repository. Reference to such resources must be facilitated in order to provide the fullest possible support to all United Nations electoral assistance operations.

11. For electoral assistance provided directly by the Division, reference to past experience is readily available, given the extensive participation of staff in such activities and their proximity to materials from earlier missions. Lessons learned from previous activities have been useful for staff of the Division in the conduct of needs assessment missions, the design of new electoral assistance approaches and the drafting of operational guidelines and staffing tables for electoral assistance activities. For the electoral staff of major missions, however, organizational and geographical distance complicate the sharing of past experience.

12. Because of time pressures in short-term field offices and the geographical distance from the Electoral Assistance Division, the organization and conduct of major missions often depend largely on a small group of experts recruited to manage the electoral component. Those experts, working together in the field, frequently draw heavily on procedures familiar to them from earlier missions rather than referring to the Electoral Assistance Division for conceptual advice and operational design. In order to broaden the experience of election experts and encourage greater exchange regarding policies and procedures, the Division plans to organize several technical workshops in order to allow consultants and potential mission leaders to exchange experiences and evaluate their applicability to other election contexts.

13. The Electoral Assistance Division will also emphasize more detailed briefing of mission electoral staff, joint development of operational plans and more regular field consultation visits. Of particular importance is the provision of relevant information in a format that provides easy reference for those engaged in technical assistance. This will require detailed retrieval of information and analytical evaluation after the conduct of each activity. The Division will also prepare several handbooks on different aspects of standard electoral activities, providing information on different approaches used and evaluating the relative advantages and disadvantages, requirements for applicability and so on. Such handbooks will allow those in the field to make more informed choices based on previous experience. In view of the relevance of the above activities for all organizations involved in electoral assistance, these activities may be undertaken jointly and the results shared.

B. Coordination with other organizations

14. Coordination with other organizations has continued to improve and the Electoral Assistance Division has expanded its contacts with electoral assistance organizations. Over the past year, the relationship with organizations of parliamentarians has evolved to the point that they now contribute, together with Member States and the Secretariat, to the recruitment of observers who will cover the final observation phase of major verification missions. In the previous report of the Secretary-General coordination in relation to specific organizations was reviewed; the present report will discuss coordination from a functional perspective: technical assistance, observation and information-sharing.

15. The coordination of technical assistance is crucial, for a lack of coordination has ramifications exceeding the obvious duplication of effort and waste of resources. Potentially more serious are the consequences of conflicting advice, competition among international consultants and overfunding of particular electoral components to the detriment of others. Significant progress has been made on coordination, particularly in the cases of Guinea-Bissau, Malawi and Mozambique, where the performance of the UNDP field offices has been outstanding. Coordination at the needs assessment stage remains difficult owing to the frequent urgency of such missions and the often very limited information-sharing in the field among donors. The Electoral Assistance Division will continue to try to improve communication with organizations most frequently involved in those activities and will try to foster the principle of joint missions, where possible. Such an approach is currently being used in Haiti.

16. It has also proved quite difficult to obtain the same level of coordination for post-election and democratic consolidation assistance as that achieved for electoral assistance. Reasons for this include the relative novelty of post-election assistance, the need to define such activities more clearly and the lack of a precise organizational focus such as exists with electoral assistance. In order to contribute to the post-election continuation of the cohesion that normally exists for elections, the Electoral Assistance Division is providing, where useful, a liaison and technical officer to assist donor groups formed for the coordination of electoral assistance. This approach will first be used in Malawi.

17. In the case of electoral observation, the effectiveness of coordination with other organizations has varied from mission to mission. In field operations where the United Nations has provided an umbrella framework for the coordination of international observers, cooperation has often been exemplary. In Malawi and Guinea-Bissau, for example, coordination with other organizations was essential for effective national observation coverage of the elections. Electoral assistance in Malawi included support for over 300 international observers as well as coordinated technical assistance provided by the United Nations, the European Union (EU), the Commonwealth and the International Foundation for Electoral Systems. In Guinea-Bissau some 100 international observers were deployed for each of the two rounds of the August 1994 presidential elections. The success of such operations, where the United Nations provides an umbrella framework for diverse observers, is highly

dependent on the degree of coordination achieved with the many sponsoring countries and organizations.

18. Experience with coordination in the case of major missions has been mixed. In Mozambique, exemplary collaboration was established with EU after an initial and less satisfactory attempt in South Africa. The United Nations and EU observers in Mozambique were fully integrated in mixed teams, deployment planning was conducted jointly and the resources available were shared. There are, however, a number of problems to be solved in the relationship with other organizations. There are many cases where intergovernmental, regional, parliamentarian or non-governmental organizations have been able to fund tne travel and allowances of observers but have been unable to provide them with adequate support in the field. As the United Nations budgets for a self-contained group of observers, the provision of field support to additional observer groups is perceived as a liability rather than as a further contribution to the overall international observation effort. Since such a situation has arisen in several cases, it is important that existing problems be resolved in order that coordination of major missions can reach the same level of effectiveness as with less ambitious "coordination of observers" missions.

19. The difficulties of achieving full-fledged cooperation are not limited to the provision of budget items allowing United Nations field support for other international observer groups. In order for any group to participate under a United Nations umbrella, criteria for participation and necessary lead times should be clearly defined, common criteria should be established for the verification process and agreements reached on debriefing and the issuance of statements. It is high time to call for a working meeting of representatives from organizations active in the field of election observation in order that they may discuss these issues as well as other relevant aspects of electoral verification. Attention might also be directed to the establishment of guidelines concerning the impartiality, professionality and objectivity of observation work. Assuming that the necessary resources can be obtained, the Secretary-General is asking the Electoral Assistance Division to organize such a meeting during 1995, in order for its findings and recommendations to be made available to the General Assembly at its next session.

20. As to the sharing of information on electoral assistance, the Electoral Assistance Network newsletter, created in 1992, has continued to be one practical means of facilitating such exchange. The Electoral Assistance Division will improve its content and periodicity, and will explore the possibilities of establishing an E-mail-based network. The information provided through the network will include data that is or will be available to the Division concerning recent publications, workshops or seminars on related subjects, consultants in different fields, electoral materials, suppliers and so on. As in other cases, the project will be elaborated further in collaboration with other interested organizations.

C. Ongoing activities

21. Information regarding the ongoing activities mandated by resolutions 47/138 and 48/131 is provided in annex II. That annex provides information on the roster of experts, publications related to electoral assistance, the Trust Fund for Electoral Observation and the Colloquium on African Election Administration.

III. UNITED NATIONS EXPERIENCE

A. Major United Nations missions

22. Over the past 12 months the United Nations conducted two major electoral missions within the context of peace-keeping operations. In April over 800 observers were present for two rounds of elections in El Salvador. Elections were held in Mozambique from 27 to 29 October; the United Nations deployed some 2,000 observers. Specific details of the El Salvador mission are contained in the final report of the Secretary-General on the United Nations Observer Mission to El Salvador (ONUSAL) (S/1994/561 and Add.1).

23. The United Nations undertook a major coordinating role in the international observation of South Africa's first general elections in April 1994. In addition to its deployment of 2,120 observers, the United Nations coordinated its observation and deployment with the Commonwealth, EU and the Organization of African Unity (OAU). Although that coordination made the mission more complicated than a single-organization operation, the potential economies and strengths of such collaboration are worth reviewing and evaluating for the future. The Field Operations Division of the Department of Peace-keeping Operations is currently conducting such a review. Specific details of the observation mission in South Africa are provided in the final report of the Secretary-General on the question of South Africa (S/1994/717).

B. Support for international observers

24. In his 1994 report (A/48/590), the Secretary-General described the positive experience obtained from missions designed to provide coordination and support for international observers provided by Member States, international and non-governmental organizations. Although that approach was found effective and economical even for short-term observation (the election days only), it was found most useful when undertaken from a long-term perspective, allowing observation of the registration process, the electoral campaign and the election and final vote count. In the light of that experience, this approach has been used for an increasing number of electoral observation missions.

25. Between 16 October 1993 and 15 October 1994 the Electoral Assistance Division organized three support missions for international observers. The most comprehensive mission was undertaken in Malawi, where an electoral assistance secretariat was established that also provided technical assistance in boundary delimitation, civic education, constitutional law, human rights and training of poll workers. Experts in specific fields were provided by the Division, the

Centre for Human Rights, the British Overseas Development Authority, the EC and the International Foundation for Electoral Systems.

C. Support for national observers

26. The Electoral Assistance Division adopted a new approach to electoral assistance in providing support for national observers for Mexico's national elections. The emphasis in that operation was on providing training for potential domestic observers that would contribute to the creation of a national network of election observers. Through that approach, Mexican nationals were able to undertake a consistent and comprehensive observation of the August elections. The mission also reviewed the Mexican electoral system and provided comments to the electoral authorities.

27. In October 1994, the Division organized a general review and assessment meeting with representatives of the Mexican observer network in order to evaluate the training and observation activities undertaken. The feedback from the meeting will provide essential input for the design of future missions of this nature by the Division and should assist the Mexican national observer network in identifying areas for further work prior to their next observation activity.

28. The primary advantages of this form of electoral assistance are its emphasis on long-term capacity-building within a country and its contribution to the creation of confidence among citizens in their own electoral process.

D. Observation

29. In earlier reports the Secretary-General referred to this form of assistance as "follow and report". Although such assistance was not provided frequently, there were several cases where it was decided to send a single officer to follow an electoral process in order to provide the Secretary-General with an internal report. Based on experience to date, this form of assistance has been found to be of negligible benefit and will therefore be authorized only in special cases.

30. The approach has frequently been used when the request for observers arrived too late for proper assessment and action. In other cases a Member State has insisted on the need for a United Nations presence at the time of the election. The United Nations is clearly dedicated to supporting countries requesting assistance for their further democratic development. The weaknesses of the approach, however, include the minimal impact of a single observer on the electoral process, the ultimate value of an assessment report provided after the election and the time and travel costs of organizing a United Nations mission that may ultimately be more symbolic than substantive.

31. Although such observation will not be precluded in the future, it will be undertaken only in special circumstances. As the guidelines for electoral assistance become better known, it can be expected that Member States will

submit requests for electoral assistance in a timely manner, thereby assisting the United Nations to serve them most appropriately and effectively.

E. Post-election assistance

32. The conduct of credible elections is recognized as an important standard in assessing the intent and actual performance of a democratic system of government. However, credible elections do not ensure that the ensuing weeks and months will lead to a strengthening of democratic processes and institutions. The post-election phase in too many countries has been marked by breakdown and later transitional failure. Because the holding of credible and periodic elections is only one component in a broader context related to democracy and the promotion of pluralism, the potential value of post-election assistance has become apparent in many countries.

33. In its resolution 48/131, the General Assembly recommended that the United Nations provide assistance before and after elections have taken place, including needs assessment missions aimed at recommending programmes that might contribute to the consolidation of the democratization process. However, the prospect of undertaking activities in this relatively new field raises several important considerations.

34. An election, while part of a long-term process, is a specific event that requires a variety of activities to be undertaken within a clear time-frame. Despite country-to-country variations, the organization of elections involves a series of clear and well-defined activities. Several years of experience with electoral assistance has provided valuable lessons as to the key problems to be expected and well-qualified institutions and consultants can now be easily identified. In contrast, democratic consolidation is a more ambiguous domain, with unclear boundaries and potential overlapping of organizational mandates. Experience with previous transitions may not be applicable to many of the situations that should be addressed. As a result, jurisdictional claims by organizations wishing to provide assistance may often be based more on interpretations of mandate than on effective field experience. A final concern is that the magnitude and duration of post-election activities, which are both necessary and urgent, are considerably greater than those required in the provision of electoral assistance.

35. Based upon the concerns outlined above, the Secretary-General believes that the involvement of the Electoral Assistance Division in democratic consolidation should be very carefully delimited in order to ensure that any programmes undertaken are truly within the implementation capabilities of the Division. In that context, the latter might initiate the following activities as a contribution to this field. Firstly, it should continue to provide post-election assistance to electoral institutions, contributing to their organizational development, systems design (i.e. the creation of permanent registration rolls) and the overall sustainability of the electoral process. Secondly, in the case of major assistance missions, the Division should produce a post-election report containing recommendations for successive steps in order: (a) to continue the development of democratic institutions and processes; (b) to maintain the impetus for international support generated by the election

process; and (c) to contribute to resolving any lingering questions or tensions arising from the elections. In special cases, post-election activity might also include the conduct of needs assessment missions.

36. The Electoral Assistance Division would have difficulty serving as an effective implementing agency for post-election activities. However, it may contribute to important clarification and definition of this field, together with the UNDP Division of Management Development and Governance. Working in cooperation, the Electoral Assistance Division and the Division of Management Development and Governance might undertake several case-studies, identify projects that might help reinforce pluralism in democratizing societies, establish an inventory of organizations active in the field and evaluate their capacities. One result of such activities might be the preparation of suggestions for future United Nations activity in this field.

F. Technical assistance and advisory services

37. Technical assistance continues to be the most frequently requested form of electoral assistance provided by the United Nations. Between 16 October 1993 and 15 October 1994, the United Nations provided 43 series of technical or advisory services. For many Member States, however, several different forms of technical assistance were requested. In Guinea-Bissau, for example, the Department for Development Support and Management Services provided assistance with training, civil registration, electoral processes and civic education. The range of assistance that can be provided by the United Nations has continued to expand, given the growing expertise of the Centre for Human Rights, the Department for Development Support and Management Services, the Electoral Assistance Division and UNDP in their respective fields.

38. In the past year the Electoral Assistance Division has provided technical assistance in such fields as electoral systems, election organization and budget, boundary definition, civic and voter education, informatics, logistics, procurement of election materials (such as ballots, staining ink, ballot envelopes, ballot boxes, etc.) and training of election administrators.

39. As in the past, UNDP has taken an important role in the provision of technical assistance, often providing coordination for the various technical components of a programme. UNDP has also been instrumental in assuring timely financial support for technical assistance projects, whether through indicative planning figures or cost-sharing arrangements.

IV. REFLECTIONS FOR FUTURE ACTIVITY

40. Since the creation of the Electoral Assistance Division in 1992, the United Nations has acquired unique and wide-ranging experience in the provision of electoral assistance. That experience is reflected in the refinement of procedures, the design of new approaches and the increased scope and frequency of requests for electoral assistance. In this context, it may be useful to reflect briefly on the primary purpose and broader goals of United Nations electoral assistance.

41. Many early electoral assistance activities focused on ensuring the legitimacy of elections or referendums in the context of decolonization or agreements related to the resolution of conflict. The fielding of international observers for such electoral processes was often an effective means of confidence-building. An international observer presence helped to impress upon the voting public the importance of the election as well as their concern that international standards be maintained. International observers were also useful in confirming the legitimacy of the electoral process to a broader international public. However, the successful conduct of an election is only one element in sustained efforts to protect the rights and interests of a nation's citizens and to promote greater transparency, participation and trust.

42. Although the international credibility of an election is critical, the fostering of national confidence in the process is of equal if not greater significance. The technical success of one election can quickly become irrelevant in the face of public distrust or lack of capacity or commitment to ensure the continuation of the process. In many cases, members of the international community have been quick to pass judgement on an electoral process, with little regard for residual problems. In future, the United Nations must measure the quality of its assistance not only by the successful verification of an election or the effective completion of a specific technical project but also by its lasting contribution to the ability of the Member State to conduct its own periodic and credible elections.

43. In reconsidering the capabilities of the United Nations in the provision of electoral assistance, one condition remains essential - non-interference of the Organization in the internal affairs of the State. Any form of assistance must be preceded by a formal request from the Member State. As requests for assistance have proliferated, however, the needs expressed have varied widely from the earlier types of verification and supervisory missions. In each case, assistance must be tailored to the specific needs of the requesting State. As a result, needs assessment missions are now an important prerequisite for electoral assistance.

44. Needs assessment missions are useful from a variety of perspectives. The visit of a small team to the requesting State allows direct discussion of concerns, priorities and resources. Such discussions ultimately allow the United Nations to determine whether it can provide the assistance requested, to suggest options, to identify the most appropriate implementing agency and to provide useful information to the Government as to how and when such assistance could be provided. The visiting team also begins to establish a basic working relationship with relevant nationals - an important factor in the general success of any assistance programme.

45. Coordination of assistance is also a major cause of concern. In some cases, requests for international observers or technical assistance have been made of several donors. If all respond positively and insist on independent operations, there are risks of conflicting advice, competition for limited resources (such as transport), duplication of effort and waste of money. With coordination, more effective assistance might be provided at lower cost to the individual organizations or donors. In cases where coordination has been established, assisting organizations can consult on progress and obstacles,

facilitating work in a variety of fields and ensuring complementarity. The international presence is therefore perceived as focused and dedicated to serving the interests of the requesting country. The alternative may be a perception of various donors competing to serve goals of their own choosing, with the interests of the country relegated to a secondary concern.

46. A further consideration in reviewing United Nations electoral assistance activities to date is the recognition of the synergy created by the simultaneous conduct of various forms of assistance. The work of experts in one field can facilitate and supplement work undertaken by others. In Mozambique, for example, police observers have played an important role in monitoring respect for the human rights and civil liberties of Mozambican citizens throughout the country as well as following the work of the Mozambican police to ensure their impartiality. Their efforts have contributed significantly to the building of public confidence in the electoral process. At the same time, however, the police observers will also serve as electoral observers, alleviating pressure for additional international observers. Their presence has therefore been beneficial from several perspectives - the double impact of their human rights and police monitoring role and their availability for additional use as international observers for the final election observation phase.

47. The ultimate objective of electoral assistance is to create its own obsolescence. Although elections are an important step forward in the longer process of democratization and the promotion of human rights, the success of the assistance provided lies in the ability of States to conduct periodic and credible elections in future. The United Nations will always be ready to assist States intent on becoming strong and vibrant democracies; the Organization will also look forward to the time when the pressure for elections and democratic transition has eased and attention may turn to longer-term issues of good governance.

48. Based on recent experience, the United Nations has noted that the context of commitment and cooperation associated with elections often dissipates relatively quickly following their successful completion. However, newly elected Governments frequently face difficult questions regarding the next steps in the transition to democracy. The weeks preceding an election are not sufficient to create a truly civic culture, nor can democratic values simply be transferred through international assistance. The transition to democracy is a long and difficult national process; it is, however, a process for which the Secretary-General can pledge continued United Nations commitment and support.

ANNEX I

Status of Member States' requests as at 17 October 1994

Based on information received as at 31 October 1994, the electoral assistance activities of the United Nations between 16 October 1993 and 17 October 1994 are provided below according to country.

ARGENTINA

Request: In September 1992, the Government requested the extension of a previous technical assistance project to improve the electoral organization (see A/48/590, annex).

Action taken: In February and May 1994, a civic education consultant travelled to the country in order to brief the electoral authorities on civic education programmes.

BELARUS

Request: On 26 May 1994, the Government invited the United Nations to send observers for the presidential elections scheduled for 23 June 1994.

Action taken: The invitation was declined owing to lack of lead time.

BRAZIL

Request: In November 1993, the Supreme Electoral Court requested technical assistance for the computerization of the electoral system in Brazil.

Action taken: In December 1993, the United Nations sent an officer from the Department for Development Support and Management Services to identify the needs of the Court and to formalize a technical assistance project document. Also in September 1994, the Department sent a consultant to provide technical support services for the computerization of the Supreme Electoral Court.

CHAD

Request: In December 1992, the Government requested assistance for the upcoming elections, the date of which has not been determined (see A/48/590, annex).

Action taken: The Electoral Assistance Division continues to follow the electoral process in Chad. The draft constitution is to be submitted to a referendum, which has not yet been scheduled. The Division has offered technical assistance through UNDP, with particular emphasis on informatics. In the meantime, a joint assessment mission, composed of consultants from France and the United States of America, will travel to Chad. At the request of the Government, the mission

will be coordinated by a senior consultant retained by the United Nations.

EL SALVADOR

Request: In January 1993, the Government officially requested United Nations observation "before, during and following" the general elections scheduled for March 1994.

Action taken: In November 1993, the Director of the Electoral Assistance Division, at the invitation of the Chief of Mission of ONUSAL, visited the country in order to follow up on the work of the Electoral Division and to participate in a seminar on the role of ONUSAL in the verification of the upcoming elections in March 1994.

In February 1994, the Secretary-General sent a note verbale to Member States requesting observers for the last phase (polling period) of the elections in El Salvador. Approximately 850 observers joined ONUSAL in mid-March to observe the elections on 20 March, mostly from ONUSAL, the local diplomatic community, neighbouring countries and similar sources.

On 21 March 1994, the Chief of Mission declared that, despite observed difficulties, the electoral campaign and election day could be considered acceptable. The second round for the presidential elections took place on 24 April 1994.

Some 900 observers joined ONUSAL to observe the second round of elections. Subsequently, on 25 April 1994, the Chief of Mission declared that the organization of the elections had clearly improved, despite several remaining irregularities in the electoral process. The electoral activities of ONUSAL have been described in detail in the following reports to the Security Council: S/26606, S/1994/179, S/1994/304, S/1994/375, S/1994/486, annex, S/1994/536 and S/1994/561 and Add.1.

EQUATORIAL GUINEA

Request: On 21 May 1994, the Government requested, through UNDP, assistance in the organization of a donors conference, which was held on 16 and 17 May 1994, to mobilize resources for the revision of the electoral census and the implementation of recommendations of the report on human rights prepared by the Special Rapporteur.

Action taken: In May 1994, in preparation for the upcoming municipal elections, tentatively scheduled for September 1994, the United Nations sent, under a UNDP project, an officer from the Department for Development

Support and Management Services, the implementing agency, and a consultant to assist in the substantive aspects of a donors conference. They also provided advice on the electoral budget and related issues.

ETHIOPIA

Request: Following the participation of the United Nations in the coordination of international observers on the occasion of the regional elections held in 1992, the Government requested technical assistance through UNDP for the successive stages of the electoral process.

Action taken: As part of an ongoing project, the United Nations sent a consultant at the end of February 1994 to assess progress on the implementation of the electoral timetable proposed by the Ethiopian Electoral Board. The consultant remained in the country until the beginning of March and presented his report. Constituent Assembly elections were held throughout the country on 5 June 1994, except in region 5 and Dire Dawa, where they were postponed until 17 July 1994.

GABON

Request: In October 1993, the Government invited the United Nations to observe the presidential elections scheduled for December 1993.

Action taken: An officer from the Electoral Assistance Division was sent to follow the elections and to advise the electoral authorities on the activities of international observers.

GUINEA

Request: In November 1993, the Government requested assistance in the coordination of international observers for the presidential elections to be held on 19 December 1993.

Action taken: Owing to the lack of lead time, the United Nations could not comply with the request. Instead, the Resident Coordinator followed the electoral process.

GUINEA-BISSAU

Request: In December 1992, the Government requested assistance for the presidential and general elections scheduled for 1993, which were held in July and August of 1994 (see A/48/590, annex).

Action taken: Consultants in training, civic education and electoral processes were sent by the Department for Development Support and Management Services to assist the electoral authorities in organizing the electoral process. In addition, an expert was appointed to coordinate the activities of international observers during the elections. The elections were held on

3 July 1994. In the absence of a candidate winning a clear majority, presidential elections required a second round, which took place on 7 August 1994. Over 90 per cent of the registered voters participated in the elections. Some 100 international observers participated in each of the two rounds of voting.

HAITI

Request: On 30 September 1994, the Permanent Representative of Haiti to the United Nations sent a letter to the Secretary-General requesting technical and operational assistance during the forthcoming electoral process.

Action taken: A needs assessment mission headed by the Director of the Electoral Assistance Division travelled to Haiti in October 1994 to consult with the Government and the electoral authorities as to the type of assistance the United Nations could provide in the forthcoming electoral process.

HONDURAS

Request: In March 1994, the Government requested assistance in reforming the electoral system in order to create greater operational transparency.

Action taken: In June 1994, in conjunction with a visit to Mexico, the Director of the Electoral Assistance Division made a preliminary visit to discuss the request made by the National Electoral Tribunal. A needs assessment mission will be organized in January 1995.

HUNGARY

Request: On 1 April 1994, the Government invited the United Nations to send observers to the parliamentary elections scheduled for 8 May 1994.

Action taken: The invitation was declined owing to the lack of lead time.

LATVIA

Request: On 12 April 1994, the Government invited the United Nations to send observers to the elections of local authorities scheduled for 29 May 1994.

Action taken: The invitation was declined owing to the lack of lead time.

LIBERIA

Request: On 11 February 1992, the Government requested technical and financial assistance for the electoral process (see A/48/590, annex).

Action taken: The United Nations is providing electoral assistance to Liberia through the electoral component of the United Nations Observation Mission in Liberia (UNOMIL) and through a UNDP technical assistance project

implemented by the Department for Development Support and Management Services.

The deployment of the UNOMIL electoral component began in March 1994. In May 1994, a high-level team of experts in electoral systems travelled to the country to advise the Liberian Transitional National Government, the Elections Commission, political parties and other groups on the efficacy of various electoral systems, in particular the system of proportional representation.

As at the end of September, the Chief Technical Adviser and the Chief Electoral Officer of UNOMIL had been withdrawn from the country pending an improvement in the political situation. Prior to his departure, the Chief Electoral Officer of UNOMIL submitted a report on the progress observed in the electoral field.

The electoral activities of UNOMIL have been described in detail in the following reports to the Security Council: S/26868, S/1994/168 and Add.1, S/1994/463, S/1994/588 and S/1994/760.

MADAGASCAR

Request: In April 1994, the Government invited the United Nations to send observers to the municipal and local elections scheduled for July 1994.

Action taken: Municipal and local elections have been postponed to a later date yet to be announced. The United Nations offered to coordinate international observers or to assist in training national observers, to which the Government did not reply.

MALAWI

Request: On 22 October 1993, the Government requested assistance in the mobilization of the international observation of the general elections scheduled to take place in May 1994 (see A/48/590, annex).

Action taken: In November 1993, a consultant visited Malawi to assist in the preparation of the electoral budget and timetable as well as with other related issues. In the same month an officer of the United Nations Centre for Human Rights was also sent to Malawi to provide legal advice to the Government. The United Nations Electoral Assistance Secretariat in Malawi, under the provision of a UNDP technical assistance project implemented by the Department for Development Support and Management Services, was established in early January 1994. Several consultants (boundaries, constitutional reform, training, civic education, human rights, logistics and quick count) joined the Secretariat thereafter. In addition, in April 1994 an

officer of the Electoral Assistance Division was sent to Malawi in order to assist the Secretariat in coordinating the international observers and in preparing a programme of post-electoral activities supporting the democratization process. An officer of the Centre for Human Rights visited Malawi at the same time in order to conduct a post-election assessment related to human rights questions.

During the 17 May 1994 presidential and parliamentary elections, the Electoral Assistance Secretariat coordinated the deployment of 250 international observers provided by Member States and non-governmental organizations. At the end of May 1994, five United Nations Volunteers and a logistics consultant remained in the country to observe the by-elections scheduled for 28 June 1994 in three constituencies in Nsanje. Subsequently, the Parliament requested assistance in the drafting of standing orders for the new Parliament. The Inter-Parliamentary Union, together with the Electoral Assistance Division, fielded a consultant to assist the Parliament.

In July the Government requested further United Nations assistance in democratic consolidation. In that connection, the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights and the Government in August 1994 signed a Joint Declaration on the Mutual Desire to Cooperate in the Development of Programmes for the Promotion and Protection of Human Rights in Malawi.

In September 1994, an Electoral Assistance Division staff member went to Malawi to discuss plans for post-election assistance with the Government and the international donor group. A working paper on democracy and human rights, prepared by the Electoral Assistance Division and the Centre for Human Rights, will contribute to the development of a national framework for further activities in which the United Nations may play a coordinating role.

MEXICO

Request: In late May 1994, the Government requested technical and financial assistance to national observers for the elections scheduled for 21 August 1994 and, prior to the elections, the preparation of an analytical report on the Mexican electoral system.

Action taken: In June 1994, the United Nations Technical Assistance Team in Mexico (ETONU-MEX), was established in Mexico City. ETONU-MEX was composed of a core team of 11 specialists based in Mexico City and 32 consultants based in every Mexican state.

ETONU-MEX provided assistance to 14 national non-governmental organizations, which mobilized approximately 30,000 observers. The financial support provided to non-governmental organizations amounted to $3 million. The technical assistance included electoral observation methodology; preparation of observer manuals; technical support ranging from logistics manuals to the development of strategic plans and the organization of quick counts.

The analytical report on the electoral system was prepared in June and July by a team of senior international experts and presented to the Government by the Electoral Assistance Division on 11 August 1994.

A workshop was organized by the United Nations in Vera Cruz, Mexico, from 10 to 12 October 1994, in order to assess the lessons learned from technical assistance provided by ETONU-MEX. The Mexican electoral authorities and the observer groups participated in the workshop.

MOZAMBIQUE

Request: Under the terms of the General Peace Agreement for Mozambique of 4 October 1992, the United Nations was invited to observe the elections scheduled to take place within a year of its signing (see A/48/590, annex, and S/26666 and Add.1).

Action taken: Electoral assistance to Mozambique is being provided through the electoral component of the United Nations Operation in Mozambique (ONUMOZ) and through a UNDP technical assistance project implemented by the Department for Development Support and Management Services.

In February 1994, the Director of the Electoral Assistance Division visited Mozambique in preparation for the forthcoming deployment of electoral observers. By June 1994, 126 electoral observers, including 96 United Nations Volunteers, accompanied by civilian police monitors, had been deployed at all provincial and district levels. A total of approximately 2,100 observers operating under the United Nations umbrella will follow events on the election days. Of these, 900 have been recruited from Member States and the United Nations system, 200 from EU and the remaining 1,000 from within ONUMOZ ranks or the international community in Mozambique.

In addition to its observation activities, ONUMOZ designed a programme to ensure effective observation of the elections by the parties at all polling stations. The programme provided for training and financial

benefits for up to 35,000 monitors from Mozambican parties. A special trust fund for political parties was established in order to provide limited financial support to all contending parties.

Regarding the technical assistance project, six consultants (electoral organization, civic education, social communication, electoral law and logistics) are presently in the country to assist the electoral authorities. In addition, three to five United Nations Volunteers were deployed to each province to assist the provincial and district commissions. Earlier, in February 1994, a Department for Development Support and Management Services officer went to the country in order to finalize a project document for the establishment of a trust fund for contributions to the electoral process.

The electoral activities of ONUMOZ have been described in detail in the following reports to the Security Council: S/1994/89 and Add.1 and 2, S/1994/511, S/1994/803 and S/1994/1002.

NAMIBIA

Request: In July 1994, the Government requested assistance in the coordination of international and national observers for the general elections scheduled for 6 and 7 December 1994.

Action taken: In September 1994, an Electoral Assistance Division staff member went to Namibia to follow up on the June 1994 needs assessment mission and, as requested by the Government of Namibia, to consult with various international and national entities as to the type of assistance the United Nations could provide for the presidential and national elections. As a consequence, a short-term consultant was provided to assist the Director of Elections with arrangements for international observers.

NETHERLANDS ANTILLES

Request: In June 1994, the authorities of the Netherlands Antilles, through the Government of the Netherlands, requested the participation of a United Nations representative in the Referendum Committee, which will oversee the referendums scheduled for 14 October 1994 on St. Maarten and St. Estatius and Saba, and for 21 October 1994 on Bonaire.

Action taken: An officer from the Division of Public Affairs was assigned to participate in the work of the Referendum Committee.

NICARAGUA

Request: In November 1993, the Government requested the designation of observers for elections for the regional

	councils on the Atlantic coast scheduled for 27 February 1994. Action taken: A United Nations officer and two consultants were sent to the country at the end of January 1994 to observe the elections. During the polling period, 29 additional observers (from ONUSAL, UNDP and the Government of Sweden) joined the team.
PANAMA	Request: In November 1993, at the request of the Government, two members of the Electoral Tribunal held informal meetings with the Director of the Electoral Assistance Division during his visit to El Salvador and discussed technical assistance in the electoral field. Action taken: In December 1993, Panama and UNDP signed a technical assistance project.
REPUBLIC OF MOLDOVA	Request: In January 1994, the Government invited the United Nations to send a delegation to observe the parliamentary elections scheduled for 27 February 1994. Action taken: An officer of the Centre for Human Rights was sent to follow the electoral process.
RUSSIAN FEDERATION	Request: On 18 October 1993, the Government invited the United Nations to send observers to the Federal Assembly elections scheduled for 12 December 1993. Action taken: Two representatives were sent to follow the electoral process on behalf of the Secretary-General.
SAO TOME AND PRINCIPE	Request: In August 1994, the Government invited the United Nations to send an observer to the legislative election scheduled for 2 October 1994. Action taken: A staff member from the Department of Public Information was sent to observe the elections.
SIERRA LEONE	Request: In March 1994, the Head of State informed the Secretary-General that presidential and parliamentary elections were scheduled for November and December 1995 and requested technical assistance in the planning and the organization of the elections. Action taken: The Government was informed that a project document for technical assistance in the promotion of governance, democratization and management development was being prepared by UNDP and that the Electoral Assistance Division would provide initial support to the Interim National Electoral Commission

through that project, which would be implemented by the Department for Development Support and Management Services. In the context of the project, a consultant on electoral processes was sent to the country in June 1994 to advise the Commission. In addition, at the request of the Chairman of the Electoral Commission, the United Nations has agreed to provide some financial assistance to the Commission.

SOUTH AFRICA

Request: In its resolution 894 (1994), the Security Council expanded the mandate of the United Nations Observer Mission in South Africa (UNOMSA) so as to include electoral observation.

Action taken: Following the Security Council statement regarding the situation in South Africa (S/26785), an officer from the Electoral Assistance Division was sent to South Africa to provide assistance to the Chief of Mission of UNOMSA on electoral matters. In December 1993, the Director of the Division participated in the survey mission sent to South Africa by the Secretary-General. After the adoption of Security Council resolution 894 (1994) in January 1994, the Director again travelled to South Africa in order to assist the Special Representative of the Secretary-General in setting up the electoral component of the Mission.

The elections took place on 26, 27, 28 and, in certain areas, 29 April 1994. A total of 2,120 United Nations observers, representing 103 nationalities, was deployed throughout nine provinces. The Electoral Assistance Division also coordinated the observation of approximately 120 foreign polling stations in 57 countries around the world. A total of 228 international observers, most of whom were staff members of the United Nations system, participated as observers at foreign polling stations. In addition, at the request of the South African Independent Electoral Commission, the Electoral Assistance Division assisted in establishing polling stations in seven countries where South Africa had no representation. The Division identified presiding officers, who were responsible for organizing the stations, and provided administrative support as required. Also at the request of the Independent Electoral Commission, the Division identified electoral observers to cover polling stations in eight countries and agreed to a request from South Africa to establish a polling station in the garden of United Nations Headquarters.

The electoral activities of UNOMSA have been described in detail in the following reports to the Security Council: S/1994/16 and Add.1, S/1994/435 and S/1994/717.

UGANDA

Request: In July 1993, the Commissioner for the Constituent Assembly requested that the United Nations facilitate and coordinate the activities of the international observers for the elections scheduled for December 1993 (see A/48/590, annex).

Action taken: Under the provisions of a UNDP project implemented by the Department for Development Support and Management Services, three consultants (Chief Technical Adviser, logistics and civic education) were sent to the country to assist the electoral authorities. In addition, two consultants travelled to the country in order to coordinate the international observation of the elections held on 28 March 1994. A Department for Development Support and Management Services officer joined the joint international observer group, which consisted of 110 observers from 17 countries and 6 international or non-governmental organizations. After the elections, at the Government's request, the United Nations sent an expert on informatics to provide advice to the electoral authorities regarding a permanent voter registration system.

UKRAINE

Request: In January 1994, the Government of Ukraine invited the United Nations to participate as an observer of the parliamentary elections scheduled for 27 March 1994. Subsequently, on 1 June 1994, the Government requested the United Nations to send observers for the presidential and local elections scheduled for 26 June 1994.

Action taken: The United Nations sent an officer of the Centre for Human Rights to follow the electoral process for the parliamentary elections and to report on its conduct and outcome. The same officer visited the country again at the end of June to follow the presidential elections.

ANNEX II

Ongoing activities

1. In accordance with resolution 47/138, updated information is provided below on the status of the roster of electoral experts, the United Nations Trust Fund for Electoral Observation and recent United Nations publications related to electoral assistance. Information is also provided on the Colloquium on African Election Administration, which will take place in Zimbabwe from 15 to 18 November 1994.

A. Roster of electoral experts

2. As at 20 October 1994, the Electoral Assistance Division's roster of electoral experts consisted of some 433 international experts from 69 countries. An additional 106 experts may be added to the roster pending final screening of their credentials. Specific areas of expertise include civic education, communications, demography, electoral systems, informatics, logistics, training and election observation.

B. United Nations Trust Fund for Electoral Observation

3. As at 19 October 1994, contributions to the Trust Fund for Electoral Observation from Member States totalled $5,982,519 for the year. Since 14 October 1993, funds had been received from Switzerland, Sweden, South Africa, the Netherlands, Mexico, Luxembourg, Ireland and Canada. Several of those contributions were earmarked for particular operations in Mexico and Mozambique. The United States pledged $2,700,000 to the Trust Fund for use in Haiti. The total balance available in the Trust Fund as at 19 October 1994 was $8,379,031.

C. Publications

4. Recent United Nations publications have included:

(a) "Electoral Assistance Activities of the United Nations System", Electoral Assistance Division, monthly;

(b) "Electoral Assistance Information Network Report", Electoral Assistance Division, second special edition covering activities from 1 January 1992 to 31 December 1993;

(c) Handbook on Human Rights and Elections, Centre for Human Rights.

D. Colloquium on African Election Administration

5. The Electoral Assistance Division is co-sponsoring a Colloquium on African Election Administration in Zimbabwe from 15 to 18 November 1994 together with the Department for Development Support and Management Services, the African-American Institute, the International Foundation for Electoral Systems and the National Democratic Institute. The overall objective of the Colloquium is to contribute to the democratization process in Africa through the strengthening of electoral institutions. The Colloquium will bring together African election administrators in order:

(a) To review and explore common challenges to the organization and execution of transparent elections;

(b) To discuss the specific roles and responsibilities of election administrators to further develop African electoral expertise and technically effective administrative systems;

(c) To exchange experience and disseminate lessons learned from recent African elections, including practical strategies for institutionalizing election procedures that have proven successful.

The Colloquium will also provide a basis for ongoing exchange and cooperation among African election administrators. The Colloquium papers will subsequently be edited and compiled to provide a reference book on African election administration.

ANNEX III

Guidelines for Member States considering the formulation of requests for electoral assistance

1. The Secretary-General provided the General Assembly with a set of guidelines for United Nations electoral assistance (A/47/668/Add.1) at its forty-seventh session. The guidelines were designed to assist Member States in formulating requests for such assistance and outlined the various types of assistance that might be provided and the conditions necessary for the United Nations to undertake such involvement.

2. At its forty-eighth session, the General Assembly requested the Secretary-General to prepare a revised set of guidelines for consideration at its forty-ninth session; the revised guidelines were to reflect the experience gained over the last two years. The guidelines provided in the present annex have been prepared in response to that request. Although much of the information in the original guidelines remains valid, these revised guidelines include major changes in policy and procedure that reflect more recent experience.

I. PRECONDITIONS AND TYPES OF ELECTORAL ASSISTANCE

3. Before the United Nations can undertake any type of electoral assistance, two preconditions must be met. The first is the need for a formal, written request for electoral assistance from the Government. To receive the most thorough consideration, this request should be transmitted at least 12 weeks before the election to Mr. Kofi Annan, Under-Secretary-General for Peace-keeping Operations and the United Nations Focal Point for Electoral Assistance. The request may be conveyed through the local UNDP representative or through the permanent mission to the United Nations. The Focal Point, supported by the Electoral Assistance Division of the Department of Peace-keeping Operations, is responsible for all decisions related to the provision of electoral assistance by the United Nations.

4. The second precondition for United Nations electoral assistance is the conduct of a needs assessment mission to the country. Such a mission is essential in determining whether the United Nations should provide assistance and, if so, the most appropriate type of assistance. Members of the assessment mission must assess the degree of support for electoral assistance that exists within the broader body politic of the country, review existing legal provisions relevant to the electoral process and evaluate the overall context and conditions for the planned electoral process. Although consideration must be given to the particular customs and traditions of the requesting State, the assessment mission must determine whether the basic conditions for a legitimate and truly democratic process are present.

5. The initial approach of the United Nations to electoral assistance requests has been to respond positively as frequently as possible. However, recent experience has highlighted the importance of conducting needs assessment missions prior to deciding upon the ultimate type of electoral assistance to be

provided. In some cases, requests for assistance have been unclear; in other cases, suggestions and advice as to the best type of assistance can only be provided after consultations with relevant groups and parties in the country. In the long term, such missions promise to save both time and money for the United Nations and will ensure the most appropriate assistance for the requesting State.

6. The United Nations provides seven basic types of electoral assistance: (a) organization and conduct of elections; (b) supervision; (c) verification; (d) coordination and support for international observers; (e) support for national observers; (f) observation; and (g) technical assistance. Within this general framework, the assistance modalities may be adapted, combined or modified in order to meet the particular needs of a requesting Government.

7. Although the two preconditions outlined above generally apply to all types of electoral assistance, a needs assessment mission may not be necessary when a well-defined request for strictly technical assistance is received. For the first three types of assistance (a, b and c), however, a third prerequisite must be fulfilled. In order to undertake any of these types of operations, a formal mandate must be provided by the Security Council or the General Assembly.

A. Organization and conduct of an electoral process

8. This type of assistance is most complex and has been provided only in Cambodia to date. Such assistance is currently under way in Western Sahara. Owing to the significant lead time required (a minimum of 18 months), as well as the substantial financial, personnel and material resources needed for such an operation, this type of assistance will rarely be mandated.

B. Supervision of an electoral process

9. Supervisory operations, generally undertaken in the context of decolonization, require the United Nations to certify all stages of an electoral process in order to assure its ultimate legitimacy. Such operations are therefore long-term and require substantial personnel and material resources. They are often undertaken in the context of larger peace-keeping operations. Such assistance is not normally provided to Member States, as such activity infringes on the sovereignty of the State. The United Nations most recently supervised an election in Namibia in 1989.

C. Verification of an electoral process

10. In the case of verification operations, the United Nations is requested to verify the freedom and fairness of specific aspects of the electoral process conducted by the national election authority. Because the United Nations is expected to make a final statement on the conduct of the elections, verification must cover all relevant aspects of the electoral process, thus requiring extensive chronological and geographical coverage. Similar to supervision, verification missions must be mandated by the Security Council or General

Assembly and may be one element in a broader peace-keeping mission. Such missions have been conducted in Angola, El Salvador, Haiti, Nicaragua, Mozambique and South Africa.

D. Coordination of international observers

11. Owing to its effectiveness and relative economy, this form of assistance has been used with increasing frequency. At the request of the Government, the United Nations may establish a small coordinating secretariat to support all international observers invited by the Government. This secretariat, normally attached to the local UNDP office, provides an umbrella framework within which international observers receive protocol, logistical and observation support. Such coordination assures consistent and rational coverage of an electoral process by incorporating the individuals sponsored by diverse Governments and organizations into a joint international observer group. Observers are briefed together to ensure a consistent approach and are invited to share their observation findings in a post-election debriefing. This allows individuals and groups participating in the larger observer group to benefit from a more comprehensive view of the electoral process and prepare assessments based on a larger data basis than individual observations would allow.

12. In this case the United Nations maintains a somewhat lower political profile than in verification missions, while providing effective support for an important political process. Since the basic function of the United Nations is the coordination of international observers - not direct observation - the United Nations makes no final statement on the electoral process. As such operations do not require a Security Council or General Assembly mandate, they may be organized relatively quickly and may function for several months (to provide coverage of registration, campaign and the election, as in Malawi) or for several weeks (coverage of the election only in Ethiopia). The costs of the secretariat are minimal and are often covered by those States sending observers.

E. Support for national observers

13. This approach, first utilized by the Electoral Assistance Division for the 1994 elections in Mexico, emphasizes the importance of long-term national capacity-building and the strengthening of existing national institutions. In contrast to the more common practice of sponsoring short-term international election observer missions, the Division provided support for the creation of an effective national observation, based on the participation of some 14 national organizations. Drawing upon previous electoral experiences, the Division provided technical and material assistance aimed specifically at strengthening those organizations' capabilities in observing and assessing the electoral process. Assistance was provided in areas such as observation methodology, logistics, strategic planning and the conduct of quick counts.

14. Although the experience in Mexico was based on cooperation with non-governmental organizations, the United Nations encouraged the implementation of an assistance programme for political parties in Mozambique. In that case, the aim was to strengthen the ability of political parties to field

representatives for every polling station. The assistance programme included the training of trainers proposed by the parties, financial support, nationwide transport and provision of funds for use as per diem. A special computer training programme was also organized for party observers in order that they might track the vote counting process.

15. This type of assistance can be organized without a formal General Assembly or Security Council mandate and can be adapted to suit the particular needs and capabilities of the requesting Member State. This approach is best applied in countries that are relatively well developed and pluralistic, and possess a viable community of non-governmental organizations willing to participate in national election observation.

F. Observation

16. In special cases, a United Nations observer or a small team may be sent to follow an electoral process and provide an internal report to the Secretary-General on the general conduct of the election. However, experience has demonstrated that this form of assistance has negligible effect and is therefore not warranted unless special circumstances prevail. Among the weaknesses of this form of assistance are the almost insignificant impact of a single observer upon the electoral process itself, the potential of such an observer presence to be largely symbolic and the reduced ultimate utility to the Secretary-General of the final report. Combined with these weaknesses are the time and costs involved in identifying, recruiting and deploying an appropriate observer for the time required. In view of the limited benefits and the costs involved, this form of assistance will be undertaken only in special circumstances.

G. Technical assistance

17. Technical assistance is the most frequently requested form of United Nations electoral assistance. Technical assistance may be provided as a component of the larger operations outlined above or may be provided on specific request. Such assistance can be classified in three general categories: (a) those which contribute to national capacity-building through the establishment of new electoral institutions or the strengthening of existing capabilities; (b) those which relate to the human rights aspects of the electoral process; and (c) those which provide specific legal, constitutional, logistic or technical advice as well as various types of electoral equipment and supplies.

18. Technical assistance has been provided in the following areas: advice to electoral authorities; design or restructuring of electoral systems; computerization of electoral components such as registration rolls, vote tabulation and so on; civic and voter education; advice on the drafting of electoral law; constitutional reform; training of poll workers; boundary delimitation; design and/or preparation of a national identity card system; election organization and budget preparation; advice on election security; procurement of election materials such as ballots, ballot boxes, indelible ink and so on; and quick count and parallel vote count.

H. Post-election assistance

19. At its forty-eighth session, the General Assembly approved resolution 48/131, in which it recommended that the United Nations, in order to ensure the continuation and consolidation of the democratization process in Member States requesting assistance, provide assistance before and after elections have taken place, including needs assessment missions aimed at recommending programmes that might contribute to the consolidation of the democratization process. On that basis, the Electoral Assistance Division of the Secretariat and UNDP, as also the Centre for Human Rights, are now mandated to provide post-election assistance. Each of these bodies is accordingly positioned to provide distinct but complementary assistance during the post-election period.

20. The Electoral Assistance Division is currently exploring the modalities for assistance that may be most useful in facilitating the transition from election and democratization activities to established programmes for good governance. As several bodies of the United Nations system such as UNDP and the World Bank are already active on governance issues, the Electoral Assistance Division is examining which forms of assistance may be required in a post-election period for States wishing to strengthen democratic institutions and processes.

21. At this stage, the Division can provide only limited support by organizing needs assessment missions, providing technical support for the coordination of donor activities in this field and eventual sponsorship of democratization activities in special situations. The Centre for Human Rights can provide support for democratization as related to human rights concerns. In Malawi, the Centre has offered to provide human rights training and education, particularly for those involved in the administration of justice, assistance for legislative reform, assistance to national human rights institutions and advisory services on treaty accession, reporting and international obligations as related to human rights. Established UNDP governance programmes have included assistance with civil service reform, decentralization and local government and support for civil society organizations.

II. FINANCIAL ARRANGEMENTS

22. If necessary, small amounts, as might be required to finance needs assessment missions, can be made available from the Trust Fund for Electoral Observation. However, assistance on a larger scale is to be provided through cost-sharing arrangements or indicative planning figure funding. UNDP country offices have been very effective in this area and many good examples of funding mechanisms are available.